

BLACK WARRIOR! rules it about as hard as humanly possible. SHOCKER! great high-flyer-kick ass new 2-tone mask! And when did FELINO! start ruling this much? and what have you from this week.

Howdy!

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #38!

It was a big week as I was totally immersed in the EMLL that PogoPete sent and I wound up watching (or "Gran Markus"-ing through, if it obviously was going to be painful viewing experience:)) 18 hours of EMLL TV from Feb to mid-April. I also watched a smattering of the Loreface mountain staring me in the face.:) I saw two good matches on one W*ING tape (a FIRST!) and batch of other stuff that was still lingering from the latest GLENN! tape!

>EMLL TV- 2/1/97;2/15/97;3/15/97;3/22/97;3/29/97;4/5/97;4/12/97;4/19/97.

(POGOPETE!!!!)

The biggest impression I get from watching all of these episodes back-to-back is that EMLL is an amazingly deep and amazingly good wrestling organization. I admit my tolerance for bad Lucha Libre is hysterically high- I've seen every undercard for ever tape from Tijuana:-) but there were only TWO really suck ass matches on these tapes that I can recall and one had Gran Markus and the other would have been good ten years ago. The young punks of EMLL are REALLY good and a couple are showing big flashes of greatness. Black Warrior (and the regrouping Juventud Guerrera) might be the real future of Lucha Libre Rudos. He is SO awesome on the mat in a very Lucha way, using amazing quickness and grace to hit the fabulous quirky pinning predicaments that make first caidas the best caidas. By the second Caida he is not afraid to take a hellish, double Jerry Estrada bump, do a breath-taking tope and flirt with cool suplexes. All that and he is a true rudo bastard. He has a great arsenal on the ground and in the air, can carry lesser technicos, sells well and has a great mask.:) Go find tapes of this guy IMMEDIATELY before he jumps to Pro Azteca and WCW ruins him for you forever(remember LaParka?). Another great youngster is Shocker. He does the truly insane highspots and hasn't got the full arsenal like the Black Warrior, but he has developed from when I first noticed him as psychotic highspot master to a much more rounded wrestler now. He is sporting the fantabulous red or silver (depending how the light hits it) 2-tone mask and is taking on the brunt of the matches he is involved in, getting in with the best working rudo and doing the cool intricate wrestling part of the match setting up the older, angle-involved wrestlers for their part of the match and then surfacing again in the highspot third caida to an insane tope into the stands or what have you.

Mr. Niebla is the perfect foil to Black Warrior with his current wrinkle in his attack- totally glamorous suplexes that kick my ass the way Juventud's used to back when he wasn't Rey-Jr-Jr. Of the older guys, Silver King is Fuckin Silver King and rules the goddam world every time he gets in the ring. During the ten-man Cibernetica match on the 4/19/97 show, he and other great old guy- La Fiero- just TEAR IT UP. These guys are the best of Mexican and Japanese style and are both not afraid to work their asses off and deliver the goods- BIG TIME! The third part of the Elder Luchadores of Excellence is FELINO. I'm never remember him being

this good in Michinoku or in any of the other EMLL matches I've seen him in. He has doubled his moves to include a lot of high-end Japanese finishers- including a great Die-Hard Kansai in one match, and gut-wrench Doctor Bomb in another. He really stuck out on these tapes as the most improved of the luchadores I'd seen before.

The very average guys range from the WAY mediocre Scorpio Jr and Dr Wagner (of Top O' Super J tourney fame) to the spry corpse that is Satanico, who works harder every time I see him despite being older than heck, to the guys who may break on through to the top worker realm- like Mascara Magica, Ultimatum, and Rey Bucanero. Olimpico and Oriental are the really young guys to watch.

The cool surprises of these tapes involved the singles matches mostly. Ultimo Dragon proved yet again that he is one of top five wrestlers on the planet by dragging a good match out of the hopelessly outclassed Scorpio Jr. The roided out Scorpio was carried to look almost credible by Dragon, a quality Scorpio didn't display against the other upper echelon workers in EMLL where he seemed like a short Cibernetico or something. Scorpio Jr has a LexULTIMATEScottWARRIORPutskiLUGER vibe that forces me to not enjoy his work. I can't quite figure it out. The out-of-the-blue appearance of Tajiri in a bottom of the card six-man was a pleasant surprise- the stiff kick to Mogur's head was about as weird in Lucha as a Tope Con Hilo in Pancrase. He seemed a little lost in the match- working his more martial arty spots and getting out the way of the crappy stiffs he was surrounded by- and I can't remember if he had to submit to any TRULY-preposterous-Lucha-cretin-submission holds. And HEY! he just beat Otani!:))

The Black Warrior vs Atlantis NWA something match was a bit of a disappointment as they weren't afraid to blow about every spot attempted. I'm thinking that Atlantis is about at the end of his rope in terms of physically performing with the better workers in the promotion and it was kinda glaring in this match that he couldn't keep up with everything BW wanted to do. BW wasn't innocent of all charges as he wasn't afraid to bite off more than he could chew in a couple of instances. Black Warrior did win with the goofiest submission hold ever to be tapped out of and I was DIGGING THAT!

All in all, a phat-ass batch of great wrestling as this is the hottest promotion on earth right now in terms of good matches delivered (and I haven't even seen the 12 man Cibernetica match yet with UD and everybody, that everybody says is the match of the year). They have definately taken the momentum of having the hottest angle on earth with the Santo heel turn and used that spotlight to highlight their great young wrestlers. Get as much of this as possible and then find more.

THE TEN BEST MASKS IN EMLL

1. Rey Bucanero Jr- RULES IT IN A WALK! Yellow with Black Eye patch.
2. Shocker!- Red and Silver 2-tone with the screen-for-eyes look..
3. Oriental- quite ornamental
4. Super Astro- Red glitter mask with triple star on the side. CHOICE!

5. Olimpia- with the truly bizarre Olympic flame on the side
6. Black Warrior- very designy orange and black bug mask.
7. Mr Niebla- More bug-like than that one Yakushiji wore- somehow.:) Large bulbous eyes.
8. Kung Fu- basically the headwear that Muta used to come out with in NWA.
9. Rayo de Jalisco- SHITTY wrestler, great mask. Very simple lines, cool design.
10. Rey Bucanero Jr- Yellow with Silver Eyepatch. VERY odd.

THE THREE WORST OUTFITS IN EMLL

1. Alacran- that honeycomb chest design thing has GOT to go.
 2. La Felino- What the hell is up with the dayglo tiger stripes and WHAT THE HELL IS THAT CRAP ON YOUR BACK?!?
 3. Gran Markus- People as fat as that shouldn't wear capes.
- >W*ING- TAKE OFF COMMERCIAL TAPE- Tokyo.

(MMMMIIKKKKKEEE!!!!!!)

This was about the best WRESTLING INTERNATIONAL-NEW GENERATION tape I've seen, which isn't actually saying much since most W*ING REALLY sucks- being basically weak sister to FMW; and it actually is the best W*ING tape because it has so much FMW on it. The best match is Masato Tanaka/Kiroda/Koji Nakagawa vs Kanemura/Hido/That fat guy I can never remember the name of. Tanaka and Kanemura square off alone at times and show why they are the cream of the garbage leagues along with the more and more incredible Hisakatsu Ooya, in terms of actual wrestling ability. The rest of the time in this match, they are basically making up for the crappy wrestling bump-takers that they are in with- selling their horrible punches and crappy power move attempts. Nakagawa shows glimmers of goodness hitting a fabulously stiff suplex and the Kiroda doesn't make me want to vomit directly on my shoes like Hido does. The end was great as it dropped all the garbage pretense and had a good old fashioned puroresu multi-nearfall, multi-hellish-finisher ending. They did the smart thing and had Tanaka and Kanemura doling out the punishment on each other and whoever else was about to be pinned and had the other four make the save or accept the bump. Really good six-man. The other good one was Hayato and Ricky Fuji in a tag match. Ricky Fuji didn't make me want to kill myself like he usually does and people forget that Hayato is the best kept secret in Japan. The rest REALLY sucked. Hido/Kanemura is unwatchable (though I did it anyway) Pogo/Unnamed fat guy sucked in Fast forward so maybe I missed all the good stuff. Kanemura vs Dragon Winger was SO close to not sucking, but could not escape the gravitational pull of planet SUCKASS. If you want a good W*ING tape (wrestle-wise) this was the one.

>MAYUMI OZAKI- PURE WILD COMMERCIAL TAPE
(GLENNNN!!!!!!)

I finally went back and watched non-underwear intensive parts of this tape and GOLLDAMN does it RULE! The pinnacle of the kinky goodness (mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm) was the Dynamite Kansai/Ozaki streetfight. This was about as beautiful a combination of cool wrestling moves and megaviolent gimmick spots that one will find. I cringe when I think of the ornate beauty of Mayumi Ozaki coming into contact with the maniacal kicks of Dynamite while Kansai's ankle is wrapped in CHAINS! It also involved a bungee cord and lots of chairs and stuff and was the all-around mayhem that we all have come to love. Oz vs Cutie wasn't good. Cutie is a cutie but

she just can't work stiff at all and thus OZ let's down and it looks like an approximation of what a normal OZ match looks like- kinda like an OZ match in 3/4 speed. Fukuoka vs OZ is back on the OZ Party Train of Rockin Wrestling. Fukuoka is such the ... total... something.:p She kicks ass and should as famous as anybody else we on RSPW rave about. Between all the matches is Mayumi Ozaki at home, on horses, scuba diving, talking to her mom, standing around in her underwear, what have you. GET THIS ALREADY! WOO-HOO!

NEXT WEEK: The Kobashi/Kawada Carnival Final I SWEAR! AJW! AJW! AJW! and whatever else hits the doorstep!

NANIWA~!